



MOFGA Testimony In Opposition To
LD 718 - *An Act to Increase the Beneficial Reuse of Construction and Demolition Debris*
May 8, 2023

Good morning Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Heather Spalding and I am deputy director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA).

A broad-based community, MOFGA is creating a food system that is healthy and fair for all of us. Through education, training and advocacy, we are helping farmers thrive, making more local, organic food available and building sustainable communities. MOFGA certifies 530 organic farms and processing operations representing roughly \$90 million in sales and we are working hard to create opportunities for Maine's next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent.

MOFGA opposes LD 718 because it seeks to roll back the critical bipartisan legislation that stopped other states from using Maine as their dumping grounds. This bill would delay the ban's starting date by two years, which would result in an additional 400,000 tons of out-of-state construction and demolition debris coming into Maine. Maine citizens have paid for the use of the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town in order to have limited capacity for waste that cannot be recycled. Maine should not import 16 forty-ton tractor-trailer loads of out-of-state waste each day just to accommodate Massachusetts' stricter waste management laws.

A big reason that Maine called a halt to the practice of importing construction and demolition debris was because of the environmental justice impacts on the Penobscot Nation and local residents near the Juniper Ridge Landfill and the Nine Dragons paper mill. This community has to deal with the odor and air pollution from the industrial operations and also leachate contaminating the Penobscot River. Maine must do better to ensure that we prevent further harm to the Penobscot Nation.

One of MOFGA's top legislative priorities this session is defending the progress we have made with addressing PFAS contamination. Many of our farmers were directly impacted by the legacy effect of spreading sewage sludge on farmland and some of them lost their livelihoods and live with uncertainty about their health due to the high body burden of PFAS. Landfilling PFAS-contaminated sludge is not a great solution to the sludge crisis but it's the only one available to us at the moment. Casella's argument that it needs out-of-state waste to stabilize the landfilled sludge is unacceptable. Maine must do better and we must hold Casella accountable for managing the waste without importing waste from Massachusetts. We understand that other materials from within Maine, such as contaminated soil, municipal solid waste, sawdust, and wood chips, could be used. Other dewatering technologies and sludge drying practices could be used before landfilling as well. Casella, needs to work with Maine to clean up our waste stream and create incentives to reduce the amount of waste that needs to be landfilled.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer questions if you have any.

